

THE BRAD HIGHWAY

A Tale of 19th Century England, Full of the Thrills of Adventure and Spirit of Romance

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Vihart, an English scholar, dependent upon his uncle, Sir George Vihart, bequeathed only to his niece (Ed) by the name of Mrs. Vihart, a small fortune of £20,000...

By JEFFERY FARNOL

shadow in the hedge may not have been Black George, after all.

CHAPTER XII.
THIS table wobbles!" said Charman. "It does," said I, "but then I notice that the block is misplaced again. Then why use a block? A book is so clumsy—I began. Or a book? Why not cut down the long legs to match the short one? That is really an excellent idea. Then why didn't you before? Because, to be frank with you, it never occurred to me. I suppose you are better as a blacksmith than a carpenter, aren't you? And, seeing I could find no answer worthy of resort, she laughed, and sitting down, watched me while I strove in haste, with a hammer and the three long legs as she had suggested. Having done which, to our common satisfaction, seeing the moon was rising, we went and sat down on the bench beside the cottage door.

these I saw in her eyes as she faced me, but anger most of all.

CHAPTER XIII.
THE cottage, as I have said, was entirely hidden from the chance observer by reason of the foliage; ash, alder, and brambles flourished luxuriantly, growing very thick and high, with here and there a great tree; but, upon one side, there was a little grassy glade, or clearing rather, some ten yards square, and it was towards this that my eyes were directed as I readied myself upon the settle besides the door and waited the coming of the unknown. Though the shadows were too deep for my eyes to serve me, yet I could follow the newcomer's approach quite easily by the sound he made; indeed, I was particularly struck by the prodigious rustling of leaves. Whoever it was must be big and bulky, I thought, and clad, probably, in a long, trailing garment. All at once I knew I was observed, for the sounds ceased, and I heard nothing save the distant bark of a dog and the ripple of the brook near by. I remained there for, maybe, a full minute, very still, only my teeth clenched themselves as I sat listening and waiting—and that minute was an hour. You won't be wantin' ever a broom, now? The relief was so sudden and intense that I had much ado to keep from laughing outright. You won't be wantin' ever a broom, now? I inquired the voice again. No, I answered, nor yet a fine leather bag with a steel buckle made in Brummagem as ever was. Oh, it's you, is it? said the Peddler, and forthwith Gabbling Dick stepped out of the shadows, brooms on shoulder and bulging pack upon his back, at sight of which the leary tumult of his approach was immediately accounted for. So it's you, is it? he repeated, setting down his brooms and spitting lugubriously at the nearest patch of shadow. Yes, I answered, but what brings you here? I be goin' to sleep ere, my chap. Oh—you don't mind the ghost, then? That, Lord, no! There be only two things as I can't abide—trees as ain't trees, and women. Come, didn't I once tell you I were married? You did. Very well then! Trees as ain't trees is bad enough, Lord knows—but women's words—ah! said the Peddler, shaking his head, a sight worse! Ye see, trees ain't got tongues—leastways not as I ever heered tell on, an' a tree never told a lie—or ate an apple, did it? What do you mean by 'ate an apple'? I means as a tree can't tell a lie, or eat an apple, but a woman can tell a lie—which she does—frequent, an' as for apples—

SCRAPPLE

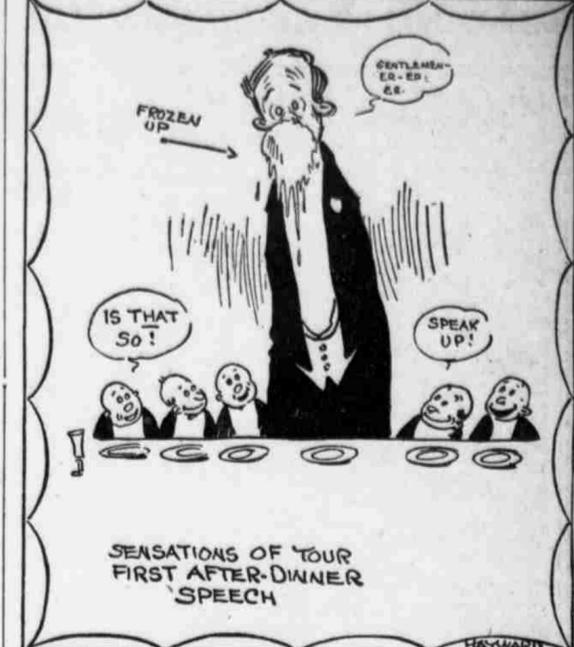


His Faithful Hound—I wish to goodness he'd give up whistling 'Fall in and follow me'!



THE SPECTATOR.

THE PADDED CELL



SENSATIONS OF YOUR FIRST AFTER-DINNER SPEECH

THE ANTI-ZEPP FIRE-ESCAPE



Jones (practicing 'easy' descents)—Oh, why did I leave that book of directions at the top?



Wife—Harold, my mind is made up—Hubby—Mercy! is that so? I had hoped, at least, that your mind was your own.



In Court. Do you know the nature of an oath, madame? Well, I ought to sir. We've just moved and my husband has been laying the carpets!

BOOK II

CHAPTER XI (Continued).

No—BUT it is so dreadfully still. Now in one place the lane, narrowing suddenly, led between high banks covered with bushes, so that it was very dark there. As we entered this gloom Charman suddenly drew closer to my side and slipped her hand beneath my arm, and the touch of her fingers was like ice. Your hand is very cold! said I. But she only laughed, yet I felt her shiver as she pressed herself close against me. And now it was she who talked and I who walked in silence, or answered at random, for I was conscious only of the slip of her fingers and the soft pressure of her hand.

CHAPTER XII (Continued).

Success is very sweet, Charman, even in the smallest thing; for instance, said I, pointing to the cottage door that stood open beside her, when I built that door, and saw it swing on its hinges, I was as proud of it as though it had been— Charman, instead of a had one? A had one, Charman! It is a very clumsy door, and has neither bolt nor lock. There are thieves herabout, and, even if there were, they would not dare to set foot in the Hollow after dark. And then, unless one close it with great care, it sticks—very tight! That, obviating the necessity of a latch, is rather to be recommended, said I. Besides, it is a very ill-fitting door, Peter. I have seen worse. And will be very draughty in cold weather. A blanket hung across will remedy that. Still it can hardly be called a very good door, can it, Peter? Here I lighted my pipe without answering. I suppose you make horseshoes much better than you make doors? I puffed at my pipe in silence. You are not angry because I found fault with your door, are you, Peter? Angry? said I; not in the least. I am sorry for that. Why sorry? Were you never angry, Peter? Seldom, I hope. I should like to see you so—just once. Finding nothing to say in answer to this, I smoked my negro-head pipe and stared at the moon, which was looking down at us through a maze of tree trunks and branches. Referring to horseshoes, said Charman at last, are you content to be a blacksmith all your days? Yes, I think I am. Were you never ambitious, then? Ambition is like rain, breaking itself upon what it falls on—at least, Bacon says, and— Oh, bother Bacon! Were you never ambitious, Peter? I was a great dreamer. Indeed, they are the most truly ambitious, I retorted; their dreams are so vast, so inflated, so far beyond all puny human strength and capacity that they, perforce, must remain dreamers always. Epictetus himself— I wish, sighed Charman, I do wish— What do you wish? That you were not— Such a pedant! Pedant! said I, somewhat disconcerted. And you have a way of echoing my words that is very irritating. I beg your pardon, said I, feeling much like a chidden schoolboy, and I am sorry you should think me a pedant. And you are so dreadfully precise and serious, she continued. Am I, Charman? And so very solemn and austere, and so ponderous, and egotistical, and calm—yes, you are hatefully calm and placid, aren't you, Peter? And, after I had smoked thoughtfully awhile, I sighed, not angry because I said, I fear I may seem so. Yes, I forgive you! Thank you. Though you needn't be so annoyingly humble about it, said she, and frowned, and, even while she frowned, laughed and shook her head. And pray, why do you laugh? Because—oh, Peter, you are such a boy! Do you told me once before, said I, biting my pipe-stem viciously. Did I, Peter? You also called me a—lamb, I remember—at least, you suggested it. Did I, Peter? and she began to laugh again, but stopped all at once and rose to her feet. Peter! said she, with a startled note in her voice, don't you hear something? Yes, said I. Some one is coming! Yes. And—they are coming this way! Oh—how can you sit there so quietly? Do you think—she began, and stopped staring into the shadows with wide eyes. I think, said I, knocking the ashes from my pipe, and laying it on the bench beside me, that, all things considered, you were wiser to go into the cottage for a while. Oh—oh, I couldn't do that! You would be safer, perhaps. I am not a coward, I shall remain here, of course. But I had rather you went inside. And I much prefer staying where I am. Then I must ask you to go inside, Charman. No, indeed, my mind is made up. Then I insist, Charman. Mr. Vihart! she exclaimed, throwing up her head, you forget yourself, I think. I permit no one to order my going and coming, and I obey no man's command. Then—I beg of you. And I refuse, sir—my mind is made up. And mine also! said I, rising. Why, what—what are you going to do? she cried, retreating as I advanced toward her. I am going to carry you into the cottage. You would not dare! If you refuse to walk, how else can you get there? said I. Anger, amazement, indignation, all

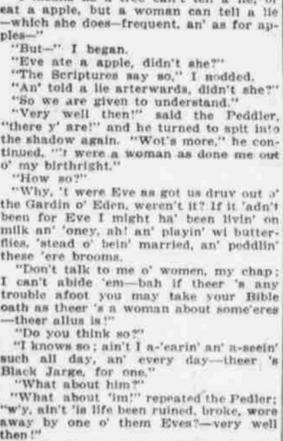
AMATEUR NIGHT AT THE MOVIES

TESSIE GETS A JOB AS A JUDGE. WOTS THE CHARGE? PICKIN' FLOWERS IN THE PARK. I PICKA DA BOUQUET FOR MY LITLA MARIA. 8000\$ FINE AND 12 YEARS IN THE COOLER.

THE TERRORS OF TESSIE

EPISODE—ELEXIX TESSIE DISHES UP TWO PORTIONS OF JUSTICE OUT OF THE SAME KETTLE. EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL IS MY MOTTER. NEXT CASE. GOOK GRACIOUS WOTS HIS CHARGE? PICKIN' POND LILLIES IN THE PARK. YOUR HONORSS. 8000 BUCKS FINE AND 12 YEARS IN THE COOLER. ILL PAY THE FINE MYSELF. NEXT TIME YOU WANT ANY FLOWERS, ILL BUY EM FOR YOU—ITS CHEAPER.

Fast Enough



Purchaser—You said this mule was fast. It does nothing but kick! Truthful Dealer—I was referring to his hind legs.

Good Night!



That's a good idea, ma'am, havin' soda and water in them bottles with the squirts. I've done the floor in no time, and there's three bottles left out of the dozen yet.

MORE LEG PULLING

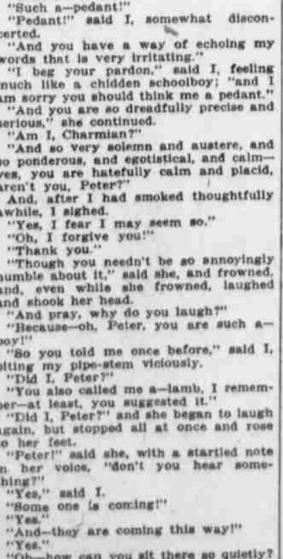


Von Tirpitz—Good news, sire. We have sunk another great liner! Kaiser (aside)—Not so loud. I've just promised my friend Wilson I wouldn't do it again!

AND THE WORST IS YET TO COME

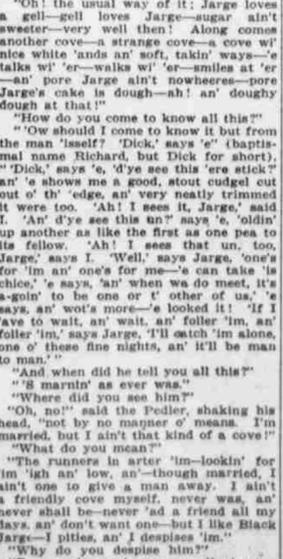
And when did he tell you all this? B marnin' as ever was. Where did you see him? Oh, no! said the Peddler, shaking his head, not by no manner o' means. I'm married, but I ain't that kind of a cove! What do you mean? The runners in arter 'im—lookin' for 'im 'igh an' low, an'—though married, I ain't one to give a man away. I ain't a friendly cove myself, never was, an' never shall be—never ad a friend all my days, an' don't want one—but I like Black Jarge—I pitias, an' I despises 'im. Why do you despise him? Because 'e carries on so. All about a Eve-w'y, their ain't a woman breathin' as is worth a man's troublin' 'is 'ead over no, nor never will be—yet 'ere a Black Jarge ready—ah! an' more than willin' to get 'imself 'ung, an' all for a wench—a Eve. Get himself hanged? I repeated. Ah—ung! w'y, ain't 'e a-waitin' an' a-waitin' to get at this cove—this cove w' the nice white 'ands an' the lakin' ways, an' 'e a-watchin' an' a-watchin' to meet 'em some lonely night—and when 'e do meet 'em— The Peddler sighed. Well! there'll be blood shed—blood—quarts on it—buckets on it! Black Jarge 'll batter this 'ere cove's 'ead soft, so sure as I were baptized Richard—'e 'll lift this cove up in 'is great, strong arms, an' 'e 'll throw this cove down, an' 'e 'll goe 'im, an' stamp 'im down, under 'is feet, an' this cove's blood 'll go soakin' an' soakin' into the grass, some 'ere beneath some 'edge, or in some quiet corner of the woods—and the birds 'll perch on this cove's breast, an' futter their wings in the cove's face, 'cause they 'll know as this cove can never do nobody no 'urt no more; ah! there 'll be blood—gallons of it! I hope not! said I. Ye do, do ye? Most fervently. An' 'cause why? (CONTINUED TOMORROW)

Too Airy



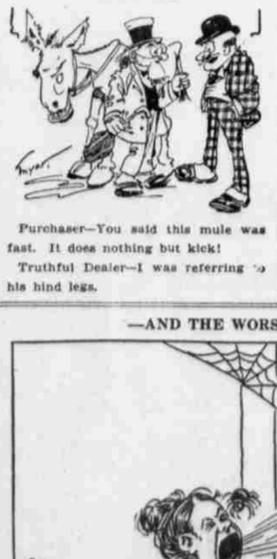
Mrs. Massey has had the saratche ever since moving into the new flat. Yes, I guess the keyholes are too draughty for her!

Fastidious



Tommy's Eighteenth Question Pa, who was the most patient man? Job used to be.

Tommy's Eighteenth Question



How is your second husband getting along, Mrs. Jinks? Oh, he's all right, but he's awfully fuzzy 'bout his eatin'. Why, he wants a clean napkin (with a week, and another plate for his plate!